

Service Date: March 3, 1980

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

IN THE MATTER of the Application)
Of the MONTANA POWER COMPANY for) DOCKET NO. 6786
Authority to Increase Rate and) INTERIM RATE ORDER NO. 4610
Charges for Natural Gas Service)

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On February 1, 1980, THE MONTANA POWER COMPANY made application to this Commission for authority to increase rates in order to offset the effect of an increase in the border price of Canadian Natural Gas to \$4 47 per MMBtu
2. The border price of natural gas imported from Canada increased on February 17, 1980 from \$3 45 per MMBtu to \$4.47 per MMBtu
3. Based on the gas supply source mix employed by the Commission in Order Nos. 4521 and 4521A, the annual impact on Montana Power Company's natural gas utility operations produced by the increased border price is \$18,224,000 above the level of costs found in Order No 4545
4. The application utilizes the rate base, rate of return, natural gas supply mix and expenses, other than those affected by the increased border price, which were utilized in the commission's Order Nos. 4521 and 4521a
5. Applicant has certified that the requested increase would not violate the applicable Guidelines issued by the Federal Council on Wage and Price Stability (COWPS) as set forth in 6 CFR Section 705C-8.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Commission may, in its discretion, temporarily approve increases pending a hearing or final action. If the final action is to disapprove the increase the Commission shall order a rebate to all consumers for the amount collected retroactive to the date of the temporary approval. 69-3-304, MCA.
2. The applicator of The Montana Power Company will be noticed for hearing at a later date.

ORDER

1. Applicant, Montana Power Company, is authorized to increase its rates to recover increased gas cost as a result of the increase in the border price of Canadian Natural Gas to \$4.47 per MMBtu

from \$3.45 per MMBtu.

2. The increase granted herein is subject to rebate should the final order in this docket determine that a lesser increase than authorized by this order is required.
3. In the event a rebate is directed by the final order in this docket, provision shall be made in that order to cause all uncollected rebates to be escheated to the State of Montana in the manner provided by law.
4. The increased rates shall be collected upon a constant, uniform cents per Mcf basis.
5. The filed tariffs shall be effective for services on and after February 17, 1980.
6. Services rendered before February 17, 1980 must be billed at the rate in effect prior to February 17, 1980.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION by a vote of 4-1 at a meeting of the Public Service Commission held in Helena, Montana on February 13, 1980.

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

Gordon E. Bollinger, Chairman

Clyde Jarvis, Commissioner

Thomas J. Schneider, Commissioner

James R. Shea, Commissioner, Dissenting

George Turman, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Madeline L Cottrill Secretary

(SEAL)

NOTE: You are entitled to judicial review of the final decision in this matter. If no Motion for Reconsideration is filed, judicial review may be obtained by filing a petition for review within thirty (30) days from the service of this order. If a Motion for Reconsideration is filed, a

commission order is final for purpose of appeal upon the entry of a ruling on that motion, or upon the passage of ten (10) days following the filing of that motion. Cf. The Montana Administrative Procedure Act, esp. Sec. 2-4-702, MCA, and Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure, esp. 38-2.2(64)-P2750, ARM.